

Message Text

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PARIS FOR JEC

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AS REQUESTED IN REFTEL, FOLLOWING IS THE FULL TEXT OF
ZOSSERVATORE DELLA DOMENICA" JANUARY 19 EDITORIAL:

QUOTE VIETNAM AND PEACE

TWO YEARS AFTER THE PARIS AGREEMENTS WHICH SHOULD HAVE
RESTORED TO THE INDOCHINA PENINSULA A MUCH HOPED FOR PEACE
OF RECONCILIATION FOUNDED ON JUSTICE, WAR IN ALL ITS VIOLENCE
HAS FLARED UP AGAIN IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. IN REALITY IT HAD NEVER
CEASED BECAUSE THE INNUMERABLE VIOLATIONS OF THE TRUCE HAD
RENDERED GUERRILLA WARFARE A PERMANENT CONDITION OF SAD NORMALITY:

ACCORDING TO CALCULATIONS OF THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT, IN 1974 MORE
THAN 300,000 MEN ON THE TWO SIDES HAVE FALLEN IN THE ALMOST DAILY
CONFLICTS. NOW, ON DECEMBER 31 AND THE SUCCEEDING DAYS THE
CURRENT COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE HAS CONCENTRATED ITSELF IN CAMBODIA

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ON THE CAPITAL, PHOMN PENH, AND TO THE EAST, IN THE SOUTH

VIETNAMESE PROVINCE OF PHUOC-LONG CLOSE TO THE CAMBODIAN BORDER. PHUOC-BIN, THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL, FELL ON JANUARY 7 AFTER FIERCE FIGHTING. IT ISN'T EASY -- AND PERHAPS NOT EVEN POSSIBLE -- TO HAVE ACCURATE INFORMATION ON THE TRUE SITUATION. AN EXTREMELY INTENSE PROPAGANDA, POSSIBLY MORE EFFECTIVE THAN PHYSICAL WEAPONS, HAS CREATED, A BIT EVERYWHERE, A WIDESPREAD MENTALITY WHICH IS AS HOSTILE TO THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT, REPRESENTED NOT ONLY BY COMMUNIST SOURCES AS DICTATORIAL AND TYRANNICAL, AS IT IS STRANGELY INDULBENT TOWARDS THE REGIME IN HANOI, DICTATORIAL BY DEFINITION AND NATURE. IN A SIMILAR DEFORMD AND DEFORMING PROSPECTIVE, THE MOST COMMON HYPOTHESIS IS THAT ON ONE SIDE ARE FIGHTING THE CAMBODIANS OF MARSHALL LON NOL AND THE "SAIGONESE" OF PRESIDENT THIEU SUBSTANTIALLY ASSISTED BY THE AMERICANS; FROM THE OTHER THE SO-CALLED "KHMER ROUGE" AND THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GUERRILLAS OF THE VIETCONG: IN OTHER WORDS, THE TWO PARALLEL AND POLITICALLY RELATED CONFLICTS WOULD BE "CIVIL WARS," THAT IS, INTERNAL FACTORS, RESPECTIVELY OF CAMBODIA AND SOUTH VIETNAM IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE PERSISTENT INTERVENTION OF AMERICAN HELP. IN REALITY, IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT THE TWO OFFENSIVES ARE SUPPLIED AND LED BY THE HANOI GOVERNMENT THROUGH A NETWORK OF JUNGLE-HIDDEN ROADS -- THE HOCHI MINH TRAIL -- THAT LEAD FROM NORH TO SOUTH, TWISTING ACROSS LAOS AND CAMBODIA; A REAL AND PROPER MILITARY LINE OF COMMUNICATION. IT IS A FACT THAT THE ATTACK ON PHOMN PENH IS SUSTAINED, OTHER THAN BY LARGE ARTILLERY AND ROCKETS, BY AERIAL BOMBARDMENTS; AND THAT THE OFFENSIVE IN PHUOC-LONG PROVINCE IS LED BY NORTH VIETNAMESE INFANTRY WITH THE SUPPORT OF SOVIET MANUFACTURED TANKS. THUS, ON A VAST SCALE WITH FORCE, AN ACTION OF CONQUEST THAT DIDN'T SUCCEED WITH THE "PEACEFUL" ATTEMPT AT "SELF-DETERMINATION" OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE TO DECLARE THEMSELVES FOR THE NORTH -- THAT IS COMMUNISM -- HAS BEGUN AGAIN. THEY DIDN'T AND DON'T WANT A COMPROMISE PEACE, BUT A SURRENDER AT THE DESCRETION OF THE SOUTH BARELY MASKED BY SOME PRETENCE DESTINED TO SAVE FACE FOR THE OUTSIDERS, WHO AT ONE TIME HAD SHARPENED THE CONFLICT WHICH IN CERTAIN TIMES, FOR THE INCLINATIONS OF THE PARTIES DIRECTLY INVOLVED (THIEU AND HOCHI MINH), SEEMED NOT FAR FROM AN AGREED BILATERAL SOLUTION. TODAY, AT THE POINT TO WHICH THINGS HAVE BEEN PUSHED, SEVERAL MILLION SOUTH VIETNAMESE REFUSE COMMUNISM. IT MAY BE THAT THE EXISTING SYSTEM IN SAIGON AND PRESIDENT THEIU UNCLASSIFIED

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PERSONALLY ARE NOT GREATLY LIKED. THE CLIMATE OF CORRUPTION WHICH UNFORTUNATELY SPREADS AT THE MARGINS OF THIS AND ALL WARS IS OPPRESSIVE. BUT IT IS ALSO TRUE THAT THIS DISSENT CAN BE PUBLICLY MANIFESTED TO GIVE ITS ARGUMENTS, EXPRESS ITSELF IN PARLIAMENT, WHILE NOTHING OF THE KIND IS POSSIBLE IN THE NORTH. IF THE SAIGON REGIME ISN'T LIKED BY SOME CIRCLES IN SOUTH VIETNAM, THE HANOI REGIME IS LIKED FAR LESS AND IS REJECTED EVEN AT THE COST OF VERY HARD SACRIFICES AND WITH UNCERTAIN

PROSPECTS. ON THE OTHER HAND, WHAT SYSTEM CAN SUSTAIN ITSELF IN A WAR FOUTH WITH NO HOLDS BARRED IF IT DOESN'T HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE MAJORITY OF THE CITIZENS? PERHAPS THEY HOPED THAT, WITH THE CESSATION OF THE DIRECT INTERVENTION OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE AMERICAN FORCES, SOUTH VIETNAM WOULD HAVE COLLAPSED; THIS HYPOTHESES DID NOT WORK OUT.

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IN THE TRAGEDY, HOWEVER, GREAT INTERNATIONAL RIVALRIES EXTRANEIOUS TO THE COUNTRY COME TO THE FOREFRONT AGAIN. AND HERE THIS DISCOURSE COULD TIE IN AGAIN WITH THAT OF LAST WEEK ON THE MIDDLE EAST WHERE THE WORSENDING OF CERTAIN SITUATIONS SEEM TO REVEAL THE PERSISTENCE AND, PERHAPS, THE ACCENTUATION OF CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE "GIANTS". RECENT EVENTS IN VIETNAM, FOLLOWING THE MEETING AT VLADIVWSTOK WHICH SEEMED A DEPARTURE POINT FOR THE RELAUNCHING OF "DETENTE," INDICATE THE REBIRTH OF OLD CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE TWO SUPERPOWERS EVEN THERE WHERE ONE BELIEVED THE GRAVEST REASONS FOR DISCORD HAD BEEN REMOVED? IT IS KNOWN THAT MANY PEOPLE ATTRIBUTE THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE RESISTENCE TO AMERICAN HELP. IT WAS CLEAR, IN FACT, THAT AFTER HAVING PUSHED THE HANOI GOVERNMENT EVEN WITH DIRECT MILITARY INTERVENTION WHICH EVERYONE REMEMBERS AS AN "ESCALATION" THAT IN THE END FELL BACK ON THEM, THE UNITED STATES WAS ABLE TO WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS; BUT NOT TO ABANDON THE SAIGON GOVERNMENT TO ITSELF AND TO A COALITION OF ADVESARIES AND EVEN LESS TO DEFEAT IT, WITHOUT ADDING TO THE MILITARY LOSS A POLITICAL DEFEAT. TWO YEARS AGO THE PARIS AGREEMENTS SEEMED ABLE TO PROVIDE AND "HONORABLE" EXIT FOR EVERYONE; AND PERHAPS THEY WOULD HAVE IF LOYALLY APPLIED AND SUSTAINED BY A WILL FOR RECONCILIATION OR, AT LEAST, OF TRUE ANDSINCERE COEXISTENCE. THIS DIDN'T HAPPEN. WHY? ONE COULD SUPPOSE THAT THE REASON IS IN THE SO-CALLED "LOCAL" CONFLICTS WHICH CONTINUE AND WORSEN; BUT ONE COULD ALSO ASK ONESELF IF THESE CONFLICTS DON'T WORSEN PRECISELY BECAUSE FOR THE MAJOR PROTAGONISTS OF INTERNATIONAL LIFE REASONS

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OF POWER, PRESTIGE AND DOMINANCE RETURN TO PREVAIL.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11, SPEAKING TO THE DIPLOMATS ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE, THE POPE MANIFESTED HIS PAINFUL PREOCCUPATION:

"... OUR GAZE TODAY CANNOT REST WITHOUT GROWING PREOCCUPATION ON THE DEVELOPMENTS OF THE WORLD SITUATION WHICH -- FROM HOW IT APPEARS TO US AND OTHERS -- SEEMS TO BE GRADUALLY DETERIORATING, SO MUCH AS TO CAUSE SOME TO SPEAK OF A PASSAGE, ALREADY UNDERWAY, FROM A PHASE OF 'POST-WAR' TO A PHASE OF 'PRE-WAR' ... "

PAUL VI'S HOPE THAT THIS TENDENCY REVERTS, THAT ONE RETURNS TO THOUGHTS AND WORKS OF PEACE, EXPRESSED THE TRUE DESIRE OF MEN -- OF EVERY MAN -- AND THE PAOPLE. FEDERICO ALESSANDRINI

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